News Release
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Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT INCREASING ACCESS TO NURSE PRACTITIONERS AND MIDWIVES

$24.5 Million Investment Gives Ontarians Increased Access To Services

TORONTO - The McGuinty government is making sure that Ontarians have access to the health services they need by creating more training spots for midwives and nurse practitioners, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"Today's announcement means that approximately 1,200 additional women in Ontario will be able to choose a midwife to deliver their baby," said Smitherman. "It means that more nurse practitioners will be able to provide much needed health care – these are tangible results for Ontarians."

The government is investing $24.5 million to create 80 additional training spots and to increase access to nurse practitioners and midwives.

Nurse Practitioners are registered nurses with additional education and experience who are able to order and interpret diagnostic tests, communicate diagnoses, prescribe select pharmaceuticals and independently prescribe authorized clinical procedures.

Midwives provide around the clock, on-call, primary care to low-risk women throughout pregnancy and to new mothers and their newborns for six-weeks following birth.

"More midwifery and nurse practitioner students build on our progress in adding 86,000 college and university students – a 22 per cent increase – since our government started," said Chris Bentley, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. "We've tripled the number of students receiving grants and increased maximum assistance by 27 per cent after an 11 year freeze."

Today's announcement is part of the government's HealthForceOntario health human resources strategy, a multi-year plan to give Ontario the right number and mix of health care providers, working in communities across the province. The announcement includes:

- $2.3 million to expand enrollment in the Midwifery Education Program from 60 to 80 starting this fall with a further expansion of 10 seats the following year for a total of 90. This is a four-year undergraduate program offered through three universities: McMaster University, Ryerson University and Laurentian University. Enrollment will be expanded
- $5 million for a 50-seat expansion of the Nurse Practitioner Education Program, a 12 month full-time post baccalaureate certificate program currently offered at 10 universities throughout

Ontario. Enrollment will expand from 150 to 200 with new seats opening beginning in fall 2008.
- $12.2 million to immediately increase access to midwifery services by funding up to 67 new graduates this year
- $5 million in salary and benefits to immediately support the recruitment and retention of nurse practitioners

The minister announced the $5 million in salary and benefits for nurse practitioners on June 7 in a speech at the Association of Ontario Health Centres conference.

This is just one more example of how, working together through HealthForceOntario, Ontarians have achieved results in the recruitment of health care professionals. Other initiatives include:

- Creating the Nursing Graduate Guarantee program, which ensures full-time work opportunities for all 2007 Ontario nursing graduates
- Fulfilling a commitment to create 8,000 new nursing positions in Ontario
- Increasing medical school enrolment by 23 per cent.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care by building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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